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ABSTRACT

Caught in the midst of flux and the ensuing pressures and conflicts, an administrator needs a well-developed ethical code governing his or her exercise of power and authority. Ethical concern in this study centers around self-prioritizing values inherent in personal ego and service to the common good; those chosen principles and their prioritization enunciate and define the leader's ethical character and leadership style. Several precepts have been borrowed from various notable philosophers to define principles and create an ethical code that could aid in performing administrative responsibilities. By using these moral codes, a leader may practice an ethical leadership style that in general better ensures his or her moral survival and success in influencing others to will a basic consensus toward a basic end. (EJS)

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THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW WAY:

REALIZATIONS AND PRECEPTS FOR THE ETHICAL ADMINISTRATOR

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THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW WAY:
REALIZATIONS AND PRECEPTS FOR THE ETHICAL ADMINISTRATOR

An Executive's Need for a Moral Code

What are some basic tenets on which an ethical organizational leader could stand in performing his executive function? Certainly in attempting an answer by delineating the oughts of this question, one ventures into the arena of opinion, belief, and personal codes and is immediately open to the cynic stating, "A philosophy is like a nose; everybody's got one."

Nevertheless, cynicism is not constructive, especially in an era of swift, massive change and instability, particularly regarding pressures oriented toward institutions and leaders. Alvin Toffler (1980) in The Third Wave prophesies that leaders of the future will become more dependent on more people in making and instituting decisions. The executive will depend more on imagination, be limited, be temporary, and be consensual. In fact, Toffler predicts institutional breakdowns (pp.403-404). Caught within the midst of flux and the ensuing pressures and conflicts, an executive needs a well-developed ethical code governing his exercise of power and authority; such a code can be constructive and directional.

Resolving Conflicts among Moral Codes as an Executive Function

Chester Barnard in The Functions of the Executive (1968) explores executive responsibility in terms of morals and ethics. In fact, he declares that the endurance of an organization has a strong correlation to the leader's responsibility to a moral code. He identifies moral creativeness as the "dynamic expression" of leadership and as a major force in the executive's role of achieving a consensus of purpose and collective effort in accomplishing an end. Yet in gaining such a consensus, the executive must deal with the various moral codes of each follower who possesses not one code but several, among which conflict can

occur. There are three basic results of this conflict: (1) paralysis of action and indecisiveness, (2) conformance to one code and a violation of the other(s) and thus guilt, or (3) the creation of a substitute action satisfying the desire or impulse while not violating another code (1976;264).

In order to avoid the negative aspects of moral conflict, the executive must strive to create new actions that resolve moral conflicts among codes for himself and followers. In this striving, however, the leader faces a complex moral situation that might be so overpowering that he falls into "bewilderment or loss of ability" and perhaps a "collapse of character" (1976;278). Barnard writes:

> It seems to me inevitable that the struggle to maintain cooperation among men should as surely destroy some men morally as battle destroys some physically (1976;278).

Inadequate creative ability to deal with moral complexities is at the root of such moral destruction because it is inevitable that an executive cannot separate his professional conduct form his codes of morality.

Ethics and the Acknowledgment of a Self

Such a complex moral situation is the drama inherent in the following ethical concerns:

1. Standards and/or principles that aid in making moral choices
2. How actions or conduct of character affect the whole of our lives
3. Acknowledgment of a self as found in its choices of values and commitments
4. Establishment of a hierarchy and emphasis of values between egoism and altruism.

In other words, the ethical concern in this study centers around the self prioritizing values inherent in personal ego and service

to the common good; those chosen principles and their prioritization enunciate and define the leader's ethical character and, to some extent, his leadership style.

Borrowed Philosophical Precepts

From various notable philosophers, several precepts have been selected to define the oughts or principles. Certainly some of these philosophers would disagree with the final ethical position of this paper and with lifting these precepts from contexts. Nevertheless, agreement with their philosophies in toto is not necessary to gleaning appropriate notions, a delineation of which taken from Alasdair McIntyre's (1966) A Short History of Ethics follows:

1. To justify one course of action as against another is not only to show that it accords with some standard or conduces to some end but also to show this to someone who accepts the relevant standard or shares the particular end (p.49). Plato

2. Good is an aim that is sought in general by people wanting what I want (p.58). Aristotle

3. Whatever is right for one individual must be right for everyone, i.e. the categorical imperative (p.192). Kant

4. The motive of a good will is to do duty for the sake of duty (p.192). Kant

5. Duty is supreme to natural impulses and inclination (p.192). Kant

6. Moral concepts are only intelligible in a social contextual order (p.25). Plato

7. Self-welfare has priority over welfare of others so social rules are established and obeyed in order to escape being murdered and to avoid war motivated by insatiable greed and self-aggrandizement (pp.132-133, 136, 138). Hobbes

8. Morality and justice are dependent on the individual's obligation to promote the welfare of others (p.237). Mill

9. From a common power come law, and justice, and peace (p.132). Hobbes

10. The public good is the sum total of private goods (p.244). Mill

11. Society is a collection of compromises and agreements (p.244). Mill

12. Institutional stability exists when men willingly give obedience and thus authority because they see that institutional authority as a safeguard (1966:138). Hobbes

Curses and Scarcity

The need for these precepts, obviously forming the foundation of the social-contract philosophy, originates in man's inhumanity to man. The origin of this perverse conduct, however, is somewhat more illusive. This writer sees mankind living under curses as noted in Genesis, Chapter 3. Whether or not one accepts the story of Adam and Eve as fact, myth, or absurdity is actually immaterial to what the story illustrates, mainly man's primordial, archetypical antagonists.

In the Genesis account, God places curses on Adam and Eve after their yielding to Satan's temptation to eat the forbidden fruit. Eve and all women thereafter are to suffer in childbirth, yet desire sexual relations with their husbands. Adam is to eke his living from a ground also cursed. The primary consequence of these curses is scarcity leading to greed and man's inhumanity to man.

Since this continuing scarcity endangers each person, moral codes are established and enforced by laws, social rules, organizations, etc. Favorable ethical connotations are given each of the above if indeed they aid in the struggle against the curses. Justice, in fact, concerns man's ethical relationships and deserts of deeds stemming from those relationships.

Justice/Fairness

In A Theory of Justice, John Rawls (1971) explicates an elaborate theory of justice based on fairness, the essence of which is equality. He compares the precepts of justice to rules of a fair game. These precepts are those that people "... fairly situated with respect to one another can agree to if they can agree to anything at all" (p.244). A benevolent person is one who makes decisions based on principles with a general perspective in mind. To put it more colloquially, the principles involve "walking in the shoes" of each person. A fair decision-making situation is one in which self-interests are not gained at someone's expense. In fact, individuals are to be viewed as ends unto themselves, not a means. (p.179).

Rawls lists as conduct guides the natural duties to help another in need or danger, not injure or harm another, and not to cause unnecessary suffering (p.114). Without these duties in mind coupled with excessive self-interest, erroneous or unjust judgements and decisions occur.

Rawls explicates the notion mentioned above as "fairly situated." This game of justice involves social, economic, and individual inequalities which he believes should be arranged to benefit the least advantaged. He notes "primary good" that should be rearranged as rights and liberties, powers and opportunities, income and wealth--all of which yield self-respect (pp.92-93, 396). Rawls takes this approach primarily because he believes that impartial, dispassionate moral judgements are most likely made by people fairly situated.

Rawls even claims, "No one deserves his place in the distribution of natural assets (p.311)." As a result, society must be dedicated to a concept of justice that..."nullifies the accidents of natural endowments and the contingencies of social circumstance as counters in the quest for political and economic advantage...(p.15)." Inequalities are allowable only if they serve the least fortunate in raising the level of civilization to the

point where equal liberties can be realized (p.152). For example, people blessed with particular talents and abilities should be a blessing to all.

Legislation and education should maximize equal opportunity. The duty of justice demands individuals to support and to comply with just institutions. The same natural duties mentioned that apply to individuals also apply to institutions. Institutions then must protect individual rights and aid in individual accomplishments that do not violate natural duties. Judging institutional effectiveness is based on how well aims of individuals are furthered, especially those of the least favored (pp.97,246).

This notion leads to Rawls' rejection of utilitarianism. He believes that justice involves the equal rights of individuals; the social good is not to usurp those rights entitled by justice (pp.180-183). Nevertheless, social good, an inherent aim of which is cooperation, is accomplished by several dynamics: (1) justice as fairness, (2) natural duties, (3) benevolence, (4) fairness of situation through equal distribution of primary goods, and (5) just legislation and institutions.

A Proposed Ethical Code

What ethical code could aid the leader in performing administrative responsibilities? Now this central question is answered in light of the following:

1. The ethical concern of the self acknowledged and defined by value choices and commitments established within an hierarchy of values between egoism and altruism.
2. The aforementioned philosophical precepts
3. Rawls' realization concerning justice/fairness
4. Barnard's premise that an executive responsibility is to resolve conflicts among the moral codes.

I. To be an ethical administrator, one must first be a member of an ethical institution, ethical in that it:

A. Promotes the general welfare, the accomplishment of which determines the organization's survival

B. Aids in easing the curses by extending services that help alleviate need or danger, do not inflict harm or injury, do not cause unnecessary suffering, and attempt to check greed and self-aggrandizement at the expense of others

C. Fairly protects and furthers man's natural rights, liberties, equal opportunity, and individual aims not violating the natural duties listed above.

II. An administrator's ethics should:

A. Subordinate personal ego, natural impulses, and self-aggrandizement to the promotion of the general welfare through his institutional role;

B. Employ Kant's categorical imperative--what is right for one person must be right for everyone--in making decisions that respect individual rights;

C. Seek power with, not over followers;

D. Provide equal opportunities;

E. Create and maintain a transactional relationship between organizational and individual needs;

F. Maximize intrinsic job rewards of followers via a leadership style balancing task direction and psychological support and treating people as ends by;

1. Providing opportunity for workers to participate in decision-making; (for sample studies, see the following:)

Cooper, M.R., and Wood, M.T. 1974. Effects of member participation and commitment in group decision making on influence satisfaction, and decision riskiness." Journal of Applied Psychology, 59, 127-134.

Lipham, J., et al.(1981) The relationship of decision involvement and principals' leadership to teacher job satisfaction in selected secondary schools (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 207 129)

Lowther, M.A. (1982) The mid-career malaise of teachers: an examination of job attitudes and the factors influencing job satisfaction in the middle years. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 218 280)

Morris, M.B.(1981) The public school as a workplace: the principal as key element in teacher satisfaction. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 214 899)

Price, K.H. and Garland, H. (1981). Compliance with a leader's suggestions as a function of perceived leader/member competence and potential reciprocity. Journal of Applied Psychology, 66, 329-336.

Richardson, G. and Sistrunk, W., (1989, Update November). The relationship between secondary teachers' perceived levels of burnout and their perceptions of their principals' supervisory behaviors. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Little Rock, Arkansas (ERIC Document Reproduction Serivce ED 312 763)

2. Emphasizing a human relations disciplinary approach rather than a strict judicial approach; (for sample studies, see the following:)

Herzberg, F., Mausner, B. and Snyderman, B. (1959) The motivation to work. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Maier, N., and Davidson, L.E. (1956). An evaluation of two approaches to discipline in industry. Journal of Applied Psychology, 40, 319-323.

Maslow, A.H. (1954) Motivation and personality. New York: Harper and Brothers.

McGregor, D. (1960) The human side of enterprise. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

3. Providing a high correlation between competent supervisory praise/consideration/recognition and worker output levels; (for sample studies, see the following:)

Engleberg, J.L., (1986). Teacher job satisfaction

and dissatisfaction. Spectrum, 4, 33-36.

Kim, J.S., and Hammer, W.C. (1976). Effect of performance feedback and goal setting on productivity and satisfaction in an organizational setting. Journal of Applied Psychology, 61, 48-56.

Richardson, G. and Sistrunk, W. (1988, November). The relationship between secondary teachers' perceived levels of burnout and their perceptions of their principal's supervisory behavior." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Louisville, Kentucky. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 302 925)

Tursman, C., (1989). Ways to fight teacher burnout: An interview with Ivan Fitzwater. School Administrator, 46, 30 & 35.)

4. Clarifying job expectations while providing opportunities for the following:

   a. Responsibility (For sample studies, see the following:)

      Carey, D. (1980) Motivation and dissatisfaction factors among professional educators. (ERIC Document Reprodiction Service No. ED 185 661)

      Holmes, Dennis et al. (1988). Study of DCPS teacher attrition patterns. District of Columbia Public Schools, Washington, D.C. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 295 918)

      Sergiovanni, T. (1962) Factors which affect satisfaction and dissatisfaction of teachers. Journal of Educational Administration, 5, 69-78.

   b. Independent thought and action (For sample studies, see the following:)

      Cooper and Wood, ibid.

      Fitzgerald, S.M. (1978) Career needs and satisfaction of teachers: a replication study. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 167 497)

Margolin, E. (1982) Sociological approaches to issues on teacher burnout. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 214 910) 1982.)

c. Self-esteem and respect (For sample studies, see the following:)

Ahren, J.F. and Gress, J.R. (1986). Teacher self-concept: Some survival strategies. Review, 22, 40-45.

Dworkin, A.G. (1985). When teachers give up: teacher burnout, teacher turnover and their impact on children. Texas University, Austin. Hogg Foundation for Mental Health. (ERIC Document Reproduction Serivce No. ED 273 575)

Jolley, J.S. (1985). An investigation: Self-esteem and female elementary school teachers. Paper presented at the Annual Woman Research Conference, Kalamazoo, Michigan. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 26 613)

Schultheis, R.A. (1979) Improving teacher professionalism. Business Education Forum,11.

Wernimont, P.F., Toren, P., and Kapell, H. (1970). Comparison of sources of personal satisfaction and of work motivation. Journal of Applied Psychology, 54, 95-102.)

d. A sense of accomplishment (For sample studies, see the following:)

Hackman, J.R., and Lawler, E.E. (1971). Employee reactions to job characteristics. Journal of Applied Psychology 55, 259-286.

Sarron, J.C. and A.M. (1987). Predictions of burnout among school teachers. Journal of Educational Administration, 25, 216-230.

Lortie, D.C. (1975) Schoolteacher: A sociological study. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Stumpf, S.A., and Rabinowitz, S. (1981) Career stage as moderator of performance relationships with facets of job satisfaction and role perceptions. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 18, 202-17

e. Promotion based on achievement/merit (For sample studies, see the following:)

Georgopoulas, B.S., Mahoney, G.M., and Jones, Jr., N.W. (1957). A path-goal approach to productivity. Journal of Applied Psychology, 41, 345-353

Galbraith, J. and Cummings, I. (1967). An empirical investigation of the motivational determinants of task performance: interactive effects between instrumentality--valence and motivation-ability. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 2, 237-257.

G. To be a peace-maker who eases internal and external pressures by applying the Golden Rule (i.e. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you).

Conclusion

Ethical leaders are those of high calling governed by a noble purpose and high ideals. However, as Chester Barnard noted, the executive faces moral destruction as he attempts to fulfill his organizational responsibilities. By using the code delineated above, the leader is practicing an ethical leadership style which in general better assures his moral survival and success in influencing others to will a basic consensus toward a basic end. As a part of his professional and personal codes, these precepts define the administrator as one who has altruism dominating ego and as one who sees the health of the organization in terms of the health of the followers. Hence, the leader has a leadership style based on a human approach tempered with a task approach steeped in justice defined as the fair application of fair rules in a fair game where fairly situating the least fortunate is a good. But perhaps the most important dictate to be included in this code and leadership style comes from Albert Schweitzer, "Example is not the main thing in influencing others: it's the only thing."

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